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25 May 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF, INSPECTION & REVIEW

SUBJECT: Nicholas POPPE: Answers to ☒ Questionnaire

REFERENCE: Memorandum from DC/I&R Dated 11 December 1952

1. Attached herewith are Nicholas Poppe's answers to the nine questions, which are believed to have originated in the Foreign Office, asked of DC/I&R on 9 December 1952 by

2. It is regretted that the awkward mechanics of communicating with Mr. Poppe have caused this delay.

*(Some of many oo reports.)*

Acting Chief, WE/6

Distribution:

- Orig. & 1 - Addressee (with 2 copies attachment)  
1 - ☒ Nicholas Poppe (with attachment)  
1 - ~~FE (Army-Park)~~ (with attachment)  
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RESULTS OF INTERROGATION OF NICHOLAS POPPE

Spring 1953

1. Ques: To what extent is the Mongolian Peoples Revolutionary Party (M.N.R.P.) run by Mongols. To what extent - if any - do Buriats or Russians appear among officials of the Party organs such as the Politburo?

Ans: The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MHRP) is almost entirely run by Mongolians or Buriats. The Central Committee and all city, regional or district committees consist only of Mongols. In the Central Committee councilors are present who are Soviets and come directly from Moscow. Prior to the dissolution of the Comintern the Soviet councilor was called a "representative". The Cominform sent a representative who acted in the same capacity as the Comintern man. These persons are sort of liaison officers between the Communist Party in Moscow and the MHRP and their orders come directly from Moscow. Soviets do not appear as members of the Politburo but Buriats do. Numerous Buriats are in key positions in the Party but their positions are such that they never appear too obvious or conspicuous. For instance, the Party secretary in the Central Committee or Regional Committee is a Mongol but the second or third secretary is very often a Buriat. In certain instances a third secretary may be more important than the first secretary. All of the indoctrination and propaganda tasks are in the hands of Buriats. This is understandable because the Buriats have been under closer Soviet direction for a much longer period than the Mongols. When I was in Ulan Bator in 1930-1934, Eldeb Ochir (a Mongol) was secretary of the Central Committee and Dugarjab (a Buriat) was second secretary.

2. Ques: The latest figures for Membership of the M.N.R.P. are 28,000 (as for December 1947) - of which 6.5% are described as workers, 54.5% "working cattle-breeders", 38.6% "working intellectuals". Does the party membership in fact extend to Mongol nomads, i.e., cattle-breeders?

Ans: There were and still are numerous cattle breeders who are members of the MHRP as this organization is somewhat

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different than Communist Parties elsewhere. It is possible for Mongols to join the Party and not change their way of living much. Mongols are permitted to believe in their gods and worship them and private (land or chattels) ownership is allowed. The only requirements of members are to be watchful and disclose enemies, they must support the government in its campaigns and activities, fulfill the various production plans and do something in order to increase their political horizons (attend political meetings).

3. Ques: Has Outer Mongolia any trade by caravan or otherwise with:

- a. China
- b. Tibet

- c. Inner Mongolia
- d. Sinkiang

or have the Soviets a complete monopoly of its foreign trade?

Ans: The Mongols do not have any private international trade nor do private individuals send caravans to China, Tibet, Inner Mongolia or Sinkiang. All of the international trade is handled by a state monopoly and is done through the mixed Soviet-Mongolian state owned corporation called "Stormong". The stockholders are the Soviet and Mongolian governments — each having an equal number of shares. Officially the "Stormong" is headed by the Ministry of Trade and all exports and imports are handled through this media.

4. Ques: How far has the industrialization of Outer Mongolia gone? — either in regard to processing locally its agricultural raw materials or prospecting and development of mineral and other natural resources?

Ans: Industrialization in the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) is still lagging behind. There are a few sawmills, several factories making leather goods and wool processing plants which are small operations. There is a combine in Ulan Bator with small factories making leather goods, wool products, canned meat and milk, glue, and bristle brushes. To my knowledge there are no industrial complexes which could be classified as either heavy or light metallurgical establishments. According to recent data available to me there are about 10,000 industrial workers in all of the MPR

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and 700 of these are employed in the coal mines of Nalaikha. It is possible that the figure of 10,000 industrial workers includes those Mongols who are working on the railroad connecting Ulan Bator with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. These railroad workers would all be unskilled as would workers in the various mineral exploitation projects. Soviets hold all responsible positions in land and air transportation facilities.

5. Ques: Are there any traces in Outer Mongolia of pan-Mongol sentiments, or evidence of a desire to absorb Inner Mongolia or the Mongol provinces of Manchuria with or without Soviet assistance.

Ans: At present there are no definite signs of the existence of Pan-Mongolian tendencies which might lead to the absorption of Inner Mongolia. The people of the MPR are hesitant to move in this direction because of the large Chinese population that would go along with the annexation. The MPR would like to take over the Barga region of Manchuria and the border areas of Inner Mongolia in which the Mongol population far exceeds the Chinese. There have been no serious Pan-Mongolian manifestations for the last 10 to 15 years.

6. Ques: What is the state of literacy and education generally? To what extent are young Mongols being given professional and technical education in the U.S.S.R.

Ans: The state of literacy is not very good. At present about 20% of the MPR population can read after a fashion. Only 10% of the population have had a primary or secondary school education, 5% have completed high school and only about 2% have a university education (not necessarily graduates). Most all of the technical and higher than high school education for Mongols is conducted in Buriat-Mongolian ASSR with a small percentage being done in Moscow. It is possible to get advance training in Ulan Bator in the field of education, language, history, nursing, midwifery and subjects of a non-technical nature. Medicine, engineering, technology, mathematics, natural sciences and physical sciences are taught only under Soviet sponsorship outside the MPR. The government of the MPR is making advances in the education field through the organization of a university in Ulan Bator. In 1940-1941 the number of Mongols going to Moscow for study was about 2,000.

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7. Ques: Have the lamas and lamaseries been physically liquidated or do the former still exist in sufficient numbers, though severely restricted in power and possessions, to be used as political pawns by the Kremlin in Tibet or other Buddhist countries?

Ans: Lamas and lamaseries still exist in a few places but the number is very small. In Ulan Bator and few of the larger population areas lamaseries still exist just as in the USSR where there are churches in the urban areas. It is possible to watch and control the religious practices in crowded areas while in the villages and nomadic areas it would be impossible. While I do not know for sure, I presume the church in the MPR serves the same purpose as in the USSR and that it is used for political and propaganda activities.

8. Ques: How far has Marx-Leninism permeated the Mongol psyche and tradition?

Ans: Only superficial Marxist-Leninist ideas have touched the people of the MPR. Not enough time has elapsed for serious thinkers to be developed and trained in Marxism-Leninism theory. In time there will be Mongols who have been thoroughly indoctrinated as there are many serious students being trained in Moscow now.

9. Ques: What is the position of the former Chinese Communities in Outer Mongolia? Is there any information regarding relations (if any) between Communist China and Outer Mongolia today?

Ans: Practically all of the Chinese communities in the MPR were wiped out in 1930-1932 and only small isolated groups remained -- primarily traders. It is not known whether Chinese have been invited to return since MPR was liberated.

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